

INFORMATION BULLETIN

New Hampshire Bureau of Emergency Communications

9-1-1 Addressing: Questions and Answers

July, 2003

9-1-1 Addressing Questions & Answers

Since New Hampshire 9-1-1 answered its first call on July 5, 1995, the need for better addressing has been a hot topic in most of the places we've visited.

We often hear questions such as "When is my town going to get 9-1-1?" or "Who can I contact about my town's addressing project?" or even "Why do I need a 9-1-1 address?" These and more

unanswered questions have left many citizens wondering if New Hampshire's 9-1-1 system really works; "If I don't have a 9-1-1 address, how will emergency responders find me?" We want to clear up misconceptions and confusion with answers to these and other important questions.

Q: What is 9-1-1?

A: 9-1-1 is an emergency telephone number. The major difference between Basic and Enhanced 9-1-1 is the ability of modern technology to identify the address of the telephone being used. Basic 9-1-1 did not identify anything; dispatchers relied on the caller to provide the location and details of each emergency. Enhanced 9-1-1 is a sophisti-

cated electronic system that displays the telephone number and the location on a computer screen at the 9-1-1 center. With the implementa-

tion of Enhanced 9-1-1, we know who you are, what telephone number you are calling from, your street address and town; even if you can't speak.



Q: When is my town going to get 9-1-1?

A: Every New Hampshire citizen who owns a telephone has 9-1-1. Since July 5, 1995, every city and town in the State of New Hampshire has 9-1-1. There is a widespread misconception about 9-1-1 as opposed to 9-1-1 addressing. Many New Hampshire citizens are under the assumption that they do not have 9-1-1 because their community has not finished the addressing process. The fact is they do have 9-1-1; even if they may not have a 9-1-1 address.

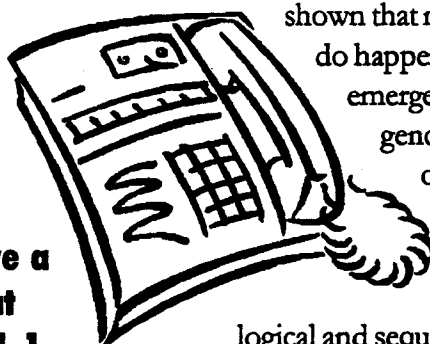
Q: If I don't have a 9-1-1 address, what will show on the 9-1-1 computer screen?

A: 9-1-1 will see your name, town, telephone number and street name without a street number.

Before Enhanced 9-1-1, your Local Dispatch Agency had to rely on the caller to provide location information. Without a street number, Enhanced 9-1-1 relies on the caller to tell us where they live on their particular street. If you are uncertain whether your address in an "official" 9-1-1 address, contact your local governing body.

Q: Why do I need a 9-1-1 address? My local police, fire and ambulance departments know where I live.

A: Logical and sequential addressing without confusing or like-sounding street names is the key component to a successful emergency response system. If your emergency response agencies (police, fire and EMS) know where you are in an emergency, they can help. On the other hand, experience has



shown that mistakes can and do happen during an emergency when emergency responders rely on their own familiarity of a town's geography rather than a logical and sequential addressing system. Furthermore, mutual aid from surrounding towns may not be familiar with unaddressed locations.



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Q: Who can I contact to find out about my town's 9-1-1 addressing project?

A: The best place to find out about your town's addressing project is through your town government (i.e. Selectmen or Council). They will be able to tell you who in your town has been appointed by your local government to oversee the addressing project.

Q: How would my community begin a 9-1-1 addressing project?

A: Each town or city's governing body may request assistance from the New Hampshire Bureau of Emergency Communications (NHBECC). Each town or city must appoint a community 9-1-1 liaison (contact person) who is familiar with the town's geography and emergency response system. Existing maps may be sufficient to properly address your town.

Q: Does the NHBECC charge for their mapping service?

A: No, mapping assistance is provided to communities at no charge. It is important to understand that the Bureau is assisting over 170 communities with their addressing projects.

Q: What is the process once we've requested assistance and assigned a liaison?

A: The NHBECC works with each 9-1-1 liaison to drive and collect all named and unnamed roads as well as all pertinent emergency response

features in the community using GPS (global position system) mapping equipment. A road map is created and delivered to community officials. The task of providing unique names to all roads and eliminating duplicate and confusingly similar sounding names rests in the hands of the community's governing body. Once the community has finalized their road names, the NHBECC provides the community with a final map including all structures with addresses and address assignments.

Q: What is my community's responsibility in the 9-1-1 addressing process?

A: The community is responsible for providing unique names for all roads. Each town or city's governing body must hold public hearings in accordance with New Hampshire state law when assigning addresses to all structures. The governing body is responsible to assist community members in following through with the change of address. When new structures are added to a community, the governing body should notify the NHBECC immediately to assure the new address is added to the Enhanced 9-1-1 database.

For any mapping questions, please contact the NHBECC mapping unit at (603)527-2069.



*Editor's Views & Comments
Coos County Democrat
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Be Prepared

It's the middle of the night when the call goes out. An ambulance is needed at the old Smith place, a white farmhouse on the left side of the road about a half mile from the highway. The man who lives there has had a heart attack and needs immediate medical attention. The ambulance crew assembles in minutes and sets off, but when they turn onto the road in question they waste precious minutes searching for the man's house. Why? Because they aren't familiar with the so-called Smith place, and the couple who lives there hasn't yet numbered their home according to the 9-1-1 system.

In days gone by, it was rare that we didn't know our neighbors. But times have changed and it's unfair to expect our police, fire and ambulance crews to figure out where residents live based on the old designations such as the red house just beyond the Johnson place. In an emergency, every second counts. Call your town hall and get the number for your house.

Then make a trip to the hardware store or Ames or Walmart and purchase the numbers you need--they're inexpensive and easy to install. When you get home, put them up where they can be seen from the road. Don't take a chance that in an emergency, your home won't be found on the first try. And while you're thinking about this, remember that the quickest way to get help from the police, the fire department or the ambulance squad is to dial 9-1-1.